

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK-----X
JOSEPH DeBLASI,

Plaintiff,

VERIFIED COMPLAINT

-against-

Jury Trial Demanded

RITA DeBLASI,

Index No. _____

Defendant.
-----X

Plaintiff, JOSEPH DeBLASI, by his attorneys, Leeds Brown Law, P.C., complaining of the Defendant herein, alleges, upon knowledge as to himself and his own actions, and upon information and belief as to all other matters, as follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff, Joseph DeBlasi ("Joseph"), is an individual residing in the County of Suffolk, State of New York.
2. Upon information and belief, Defendant Rita DeBlasi, ("Rita"), is an individual residing in the County of Maricopa, State of Arizona.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to the Article VI, § 7 of the Constitution of the State of New York.
4. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendant pursuant to CPLR § 302.
5. Venue is appropriate pursuant to CPLR § 503, as the Plaintiff is a resident of this county.

FACTS

Background

6. Joseph's parents, Dr. Joseph DeBlasi and Regina DeBlasi (née Paladino) were married in 1965.
7. Joseph was born in Chicago, Illinois on November 9, 1968, while his father was attending Chicago Medical School.
8. Dr. DeBlasi and his wife subsequently returned to their native New York and had two more sons, Stephen and Kevin, in 1970 and 1971.
9. At the time, Dr. DeBlasi was doing his residency at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, and the family lived in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Canarsie.

Divorce and Remarriage

10. In 1972, Dr. DeBlasi abandoned his wife and young family in Brooklyn and moved to Staten Island.
11. A subsequent divorce decree gave custody of the three children to Regina, with Dr. DeBlasi receiving visitation rights on alternating weekends.
12. In 1976, Dr. DeBlasi married Rita Sylvani. The couple made their home in Staten Island.
13. Dr. DeBlasi and Rita went on to have two sons.

Abduction and Custody

14. In 1978, Dr. DeBlasi decided to seek full custody of Joseph.
15. Instead of pursuing custody through the usual channels, however, Dr. DeBlasi hatched a devious plan to achieve his goal.
16. In August 1978, Dr. DeBlasi convinced Joseph, who was then only nine years old, to sneak away from his home in Brooklyn while he was supposed to be outside playing.

17. When Joseph did so, he was met by Dr. DeBlasi, who secreted him away from Brooklyn to Staten Island.
18. Believing that Joseph had been abducted, Regina, Stephen, and Kevin frantically searched the neighborhood and contacted the New York City Police Department to report Joseph missing.
19. After letting his ex-wife and sons panic for several hours, Dr. DeBlasi called Regina, and told her that Joseph had taken a cab to Staten Island because he had decided that he no longer wanted to live with his mother. This was not true.
20. In fact, Joseph only snuck away at the insistence of his father.
21. Dr. DeBlasi subsequently encouraged Joseph to lie about his mother, and to repeat the fake-runaway story, in order to secure full custody of Joseph, and to move him from Brooklyn to Staten Island.
22. This plan came to fruition in the spring of 1979, when Dr. DeBlasi was granted full custody of Joseph. Thereafter, Joseph lost virtually all contact with his biological mother.

Child Sexual Abuse

23. When Joseph moved into his father's Staten Island home, he was instructed to call Rita "Mom."
24. Rita did not, however, act anything like a mother to Joseph, despite being partly responsible for his welfare and upbringing and knowing his status as a vulnerable child.
25. After bathing Joseph, Rita would ask Joseph to give her a "thank you kiss" on her cheek.
26. In the course of time, Rita moved the kisses from her cheek to her lips, eventually touching her tongue to Joseph's whenever the kisses would occur.

27. When Joseph was approximately 13 years old and had become too old for Rita to bathe, she would come into his room at night for a "good night kiss."
28. Rita's kisses, however, were long and sexual.
29. Rita's aggressive French kissing often caused the Joseph to ejaculate in his pants.
30. Eventually, Rita began to kiss Joseph at times other than before bed.
31. The two began to kiss and grope each other at different times of the day, while no one else was watching. These sessions would continue until Rita caused Joseph to ejaculate.
32. As a pubescent teenager, Joseph did not understand, at the time, that Rita's actions constituted child sexual abuse. In any case, he was prevented from reporting the abuse to a doctor, as his father also served as his pediatrician.
33. In 1983, the family moved to New Jersey, where Rita's ritual abuse of Joseph continued.
34. In 1986, Joseph enrolled as a freshman at Rutgers University. Shortly thereafter, the abuse ceased.

Effects of Abuse

35. In 1989, during his junior year at Rutgers, Joseph became severely depressed and suicidal.
36. He withdrew from classes and was hospitalized in the psychiatric ward of Staten Island University Hospital, where he was diagnosed as manic depressive.
37. This began Joseph's lifelong struggle with mental health issues. This struggle has included multiple hospitalizations, countless bouts of severe depression, myriad medications, and even electric shock treatments.
38. As a direct result of Rita's sexual abuse, Joseph has suffered, and will continue to suffer, great pain of mind and body, severe and permanent emotional distress, physical

manifestations of emotional distress, embarrassment, loss of self-esteem, humiliation, physical, personal, and psychological injuries.

39. Joseph was prevented, and will continue to be prevented, from performing normal daily activities and obtaining the full enjoyment of life and has incurred and will continue to incur expenses for psychological treatment, therapy, and counseling. Furthermore, Joseph has also incurred loss of income and loss of earning capacity.

CAUSES OF ACTION

First Cause of Action Assault

40. Rita's predatory, abusive, manipulative, and unlawful acts against Joseph created an imminent and reasonable apprehension of harmful and offensive contact in Joseph.
41. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned assaults, Joseph has sustained in the past and will continue to sustain in the future serious and severe physical injuries, psychological injuries, emotional distress, mental anguish, embarrassment, and humiliation.
42. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned assaults, Joseph has incurred medical expenses and other economic damages.

Second Cause of Action Battery

43. Rita repeatedly made intentional, harmful, and offensive bodily contact with Joseph.
44. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned batteries, Joseph has sustained in the past and will continue to sustain in the future serious and severe physical injuries, psychological injuries, emotional distress, mental anguish, embarrassment, and humiliation.

45. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned assaults, Joseph has incurred medical expenses and other economic damages.

***Third Cause of Action
Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress***

46. Rita's actions were extreme and outrageous, and were done with the intent to cause, or disregard of a substantial probability of causing, severe emotional distress to Joseph. Joseph suffered severe emotional distress as a result of Rita's actions.
47. As a direct and proximate result of Rita's aforementioned actions, Joseph has sustained in the past and will continue to sustain in the future serious and severe physical injuries, psychological injuries, emotional distress, mental anguish, embarrassment, and humiliation.
48. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned assaults, Joseph has incurred medical expenses and other economic damages.

***Fourth Cause of Action
Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress***

49. Rita's above-described actions were negligent.
50. Rita's actions unreasonably and directly endangered Joseph's safety and caused him to fear for his safety.
51. As a direct and proximate result of the Rita's actions, Joseph has sustained in the past and will continue to sustain in the future serious and severe physical injuries, psychological injuries, emotional distress, mental anguish, embarrassment, and humiliation.
52. As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned assaults, Joseph has incurred medical expenses and other economic damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Joseph demands judgment against Rita in the form of and/or for economic, compensatory, and/or punitive damages (where applicable), interest, injunctive relief, and any other damages permitted by law. Joseph also demands judgment against Rita for each cause of action and for all applicable and permissible damages, in an amount to be assessed at the time of trial. Joseph further demands all attorneys' fees, disbursements and other costs and all further relief, equitable or otherwise, to which he is entitled and/or which the court deems just and proper.

JURY DEMAND

A trial by jury is demanded on all issues so triable. Pursuant to § 4 of the New York Child Victims Act, this matter is entitled to a trial preference.

Dated: Carle Place, New York
October 9, 2019

LEEDS BROWN LAW, P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
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ANDREW COSTELLO

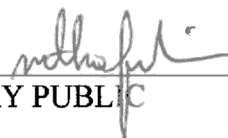
VERIFICATION

STATE OF NEW YORK)
COUNTY OF Suffolk) ss.:

JOSEPH DEBLASI, being duly sworn, states that he is the Plaintiff herein, that he has reviewed the foregoing Complaint, that the contents of said Complaint are true to his own knowledge, and that as to matters stated to be alleged upon information, he believes them to be true.


JOSEPH DEBLASI

Duly sworn to before me
this 9th day of OCTOBER, 2019


NOTARY PUBLIC

Maria T. Hofilena
NOTARY PUBLIC, State of New York
No. 01HO6220750
Qualified in Suffolk County
Commission Expires April 19, 2022